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hold a vast diversity of views regarding the great questions which at present agitate the human mind, we could not for a moment think of recommending the dismissal, or even the criticism, of a teacher, even if some of his opinions should, in some quarters, be regarded as visionary. Such a course would be equivalent to saying that no professor should teach anything which is not accepted by everybody as true. This would cut our curriculum down to very small proportions. We cannot for a moment believe that knowledge has reached its final goal, or that the present condition of society is perfect. We must therefore welcome from our teachers such discussions as shall suggest the means and prepare the way by which knowledge may be extended, present evils be removed, and others prevented. We feel that we would be unworthy the position we hold if we did not believe in progress in all departments of knowledge. In all lines of academic investigation it is of the utmost importance that the investigator should be absolutely free to follow the indications of truth wherever they may lead. Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.

We are glad that this should go upon the record *quantum valeat*, but it still appears to us that the occasion was one on which a great State university might safely and usefully have given forth a more certain sound.

Failing this, the University of Wisconsin is to be congratulated on its escape from the task, with which it appeared to be menaced, of drawing the line between economic orthodoxy and economic heresy. Professor Ely is to be congratulated on the enjoyment of a truly uncovenanted mercy in having been made the defendant so greatly to his personal advantage. Job's desire was that his adversary had written a book; but Mr. Wells did far better than this for Professor Ely. As for Mr. Wells, we do not perceive any ground for congratulating him.

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#### ROSCHER'S PROGRAMME OF 1843.

The late Professor Wilhelm Roscher must, beyond question, be regarded as the founder of the historical school of economists, so far as that part can be assigned to any one writer. It was the "Preface" to his *Grundriss zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirthschaft, nach geschichtlicher Methode* (Outline of

Lectures on Political Economy, following the Historical Method) which sounded the first clear note of the new movement in academic circles, and inspired its further progress. It is, therefore, justly described by subsequent writers as a sort of manifesto,—as a programme not only for Roscher's own scientific activity, but also for the future work of the historical school.

A brief abstract of these significant pages has been given by Professor Cohn in the first volume of his *Grundlegung*, and by Dr. Ingram in his *History*. But these omit some points essential to a complete estimate of Roscher's position. The *Grundriss* itself has never been reprinted. It is difficult to obtain; and it is very evident that not a few of those who have written about Roscher's place in the history of economics—both among sympathizers and non-sympathizers—have failed to give adequate attention to Roscher's own words. It may be worth while, accordingly, to print a translation of the "Preface" as a document, and in the interests of historical accuracy, now that attention is naturally being turned anew to Roscher's achievements.

The *Grundriss* is an octavo of 150 pages, published by the Dieterich house at Göttingen. It includes an "Introduction" of less than five pages, and four books entitled, "General Part" (including Production, Distribution, and Consumption of Goods, and occupying twenty-two pages); "National Economy," *Volkswirthschaft* (including a treatment, primarily historical and descriptive, of Agriculture, Industry, Trade, Population, and Poor Law, and occupying seventy-four pages); "State-household," *Staatshaushalt* (chiefly given up to Taxation and Public Finance, and taking forty-three pages); and a "Bibliography," or *Literärgeschichte*, of seven pages. Even these bare facts of arrangement are not without their significance. The work is made up of brief paragraphs, much as in Roscher's later treatises, but more compressed, omitting verbs, and often merely indicating the subjects discussed. It is preceded by the celebrated

#### PREFACE.

The following little work is simply intended for the purposes of the author's lectures. The more the subject-matter of political science

daily increases in bulk, the less possible it becomes to work through it at all satisfactorily in a course of, at most, a hundred hours. And yet, as North-western Germany is almost entirely wanting in opportunities for an administrative career, it would hardly be expedient to deal with political economy and financial science, or even economic policy (*Wirtschaftspolizei*), in separate courses. And so for the author to put into print the outlines which he has hitherto dictated, together with a list of books for beginners, and thereby to gain twelve or fifteen hours to expand his lectures in, seems to him a quite sufficient advantage of itself. But he does not in the least intend by this to make it unnecessary for his hearers to take notes. He knows from his own experience how greatly the practice of writing the substance of a lecture conduces to attention during the hour, and regularity in attendance upon the course.

Should any one acquainted with the science happen to take up this little book, he will not fail to notice that underlying the whole there is a peculiar and carefully followed method; to wit, the historical. It is clear, of course, that any judgment upon it must be deferred until in larger works I have clad in flesh and blood what is here a mere skeleton. The historical method exhibits itself, not only in the external form of a chronological arrangement of the material, wherever that is possible, but most of all in the following fundamental ideas:—

1. The question how the wealth of a nation is best furthered we, like others, regard as a main question; but it constitutes by no means our essential purpose. Political economy (*die Staatswirtschaft*) is not only a chrematistic, an art,—the art of becoming rich,—it is also a political science, whose business it is to pass judgment on and rule over *men*. Our aim is the representation (*Darstellung*) of what nations have thought, willed, and discovered in the economic field, what they have striven after and attained, why they have striven after and why they have attained it. Such a presentation is only possible in closest alliance with the other sciences of national life, and especially the history of law, the history of society, and the history of civilization.

2. The nation is not merely the mass of individuals now living. He, therefore, who seeks to investigate the national economy, finds it impossible to satisfy himself with the observation of merely contemporary conditions. Accordingly, the study of earlier stages of civilization — which, in any case, is the best teacher for all the ruder peoples of to-day — appears to us of almost equal importance, even though it is not possible in lecturing to give the same amount of time to it.

3. The difficulty of picking out the essential and normal (*das Gesetzmässige*) from the great mass of phenomena makes it obligatory upon us to compare with one another, from the economic point of view, *all* nations of which we can learn anything. Indeed, the nations of the modern world are so entwined with one another that no fundamental treatment of one is possible without a treatment of all. And the ancient peoples, whose career is already ended, are peculiarly instructive, in that their whole development lies completed before us. So that where in the modern economy a tendency can be shown similar to the old, the parallel furnishes us with a priceless clew to the estimate to be formed of it.

4. The historical method will not be quick either to praise or blame any economic institution absolutely, as, indeed, it is certain that there have been few institutions that have been wholesome or harmful for all peoples and all stages of civilization. The leading-strings of the child, the crutch of the aged, would be unbearable by the grown man. On the contrary, it is a principal task of science to show how and why from reason has gradually arisen folly, from a benefaction a curse. No doubt the man of genius, although his study of the matter in hand may have been but slight, will easily distinguish the essentials, which are the main things in practice, and readily separate the effete from the living. But what teacher can plan his lectures for none but men of genius? As a rule, he alone can rightly judge when, how and why, *e.g.*, land taxes, feudal dues, gild privileges, the monopoly of trading companies, must be abolished, who has completely understood why at one time they had to be introduced. Yet it is not to be supposed that this teaching will make practice easier, like a *pons asinorum*. Indeed, it will add to its difficulties, since it will call attention to the thousand and one considerations which have to be taken into account at every step of the legislator or administrator.

It will be seen that this method aims at much the same result for political economy as the method of Savigny and Eichhorn has attained in jurisprudence. It is remote (*liegt fern*) from the school of Ricardo, although in itself it by no means opposes it, and thankfully seeks to make use of its results. For that very reason it is nearer to the methods of Malthus and Rau. And, far as I am from holding that it is the only way to truth, or even the very shortest, I am equally far from doubting that it leads through districts of peculiar beauty and fruitfulness, and that, once properly cultivated, it will never be quite abandoned. To history, historical economics can, and ought to, render somewhat the same service as histology and organic chemistry render to-day to natural history.

That I have throughout inserted in the outline a treatment of economic policy and of measures for promoting prosperity (*die Wirtschafts- oder Wohlfahrtspolizei*) will not surprise any one after §§ 3 and 4. The other main division of administrative science (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) — namely, legal administration (*Rechtspolizei*) — I am accustomed to discuss in my lectures on politics (*in politischen Vorlesungen*), where general administrative institutions and principles find a suitable place. It may be rather more surprising that I should have placed the literature of political economy at the end of the whole rather than after the Introduction, as is the custom. But I know from experience that, when one follows the latter plan, it is either impossible, or possible only with an infinite expenditure of time, to turn the list of names into a succession of life-like and well-grouped characterizations. But at the end, when the hearers already know something of the science, each book can be described in few words, and therewith may be combined a wholesome repetition of the most difficult and controverted subjects.

GOTTINGEN, Easter, 1843.

The statement of Roscher's position here given needs, however, to be supplemented by the first part of the *Grundriss* itself, the

#### INTRODUCTION.

##### §1. METHOD OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCES IN GENERAL.

1. *Distinction between the Historical and the Philosophical Methods.*— The philosopher seeks after a system of concepts or judgments as abstract as possible,— *i.e.*, divested as much as possible of the contingencies of space and time; the historian, a delineation of human developments and relations, as closely as possible copied from real life. The former has explained a fact when he has defined it, and no concept appears in his definition which has not been already examined in the earlier portions of his system: the latter [has explained a fact] when he has pictured the men by whom and for whom it came to be.

2. *Subjective Character of the Philosophical Ideals of the State.*— The commonest form under which the philosophical doctrine of the state appears is that of the ideal state. Divers expressions for it. Great differences both in fundamental ideas and in results. Yet almost all ideals, abstract as they may appear at first glance, are only somewhat improved copies of the conditions which actually surround the author, or which the party of the author seeks to introduce. The same thing with the laws of nature and æsthetics. The only exceptions are the eclectics, and those philosophers of originality who avoid all detail.

Proof of the proposition from the leading theorists of modern times: Machiavelli, the reformers, the Jesuits, the absolutists of the seventeenth century, Locke, Montesquieu, the revolutionaries, the reactionaries, the constitutionalists. The case the same even with Plato. Explanation of this law: the influence of great theorists usually rests upon their giving scientific expression to the dim feelings and unexplained wishes of their contemporaries, and furnishing them with scientific justification. But the real needs of a people must always, in the long run, be actually satisfied. It is only when, by the passage of generations, a people has gradually become something different that the individuals, who also have now changed, really come to need changed institutions. Such crises, when they are passed through in a legal manner, are called reforms; when with violence, revolutions. And thus when two philosophers work up into systems the differing political creeds of two parties, they do not, regarded historically, contradict one another. Each may be justified for his own people and his own time.

3. *Historical Method.*— Examination of the political impulse among men, which can only be investigated by means of a comparison of all known peoples. What is uniform in the development of the different peoples put in the form of a law of development. Work of the historian and of the student of natural history similar. This historical method has, in any case, if it does not altogether go astray, objective truth. It is most instructive for the men of affairs, less indeed through immediate precept than by the formation of general political sense. Its highest aim is to hand on to posterity in scientific shape the political results to which humanity has attained.

Section 2 is given up to definitions, which need not be cited here.

### § 3. POSITION OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE CIRCLE OF THE POLITICAL SCIENCES.

Political Economy (*Staatswirthschaft*) is the doctrine (*Lehre*) of the laws of development of the national economy (*Volkswirthschaft*).

1. *Relation to the Cameral Sciences.*— Short literary history of the Cameral Sciences. The Cameral Sciences, or Private Economics (*Privatökonomik*), divided into Agriculture, Technology, Commercial Education, Forestry, and Architecture. Their object is to represent the present position and the most advantageous methods of the various branches of industry. Therefore, necessary auxiliaries to Political Economy. But, while the Cameralist has to do with things themselves, things interest the economist only so far as they affect human, and especially political, relations.

2. *Relation to the Other Political Sciences.*— Politics is the doctrine

of the laws of development of the state as a whole. Political Economy an especially important part thereof, and therefore one worked out with especial detail. International Law has the same relation to Politics: it is the more complete presentation of the foreign relations of the state. Important subdivisions of these branches: Financial Science and Diplomatics. Under Administration (*Polizei*) we understand the action of the state designed for the immediate protection of external order. So Administration forms one side of what is peculiarly called Politics (as legal administration), just as it does of Political Economy (commercial policy, policy as to transportation, etc.) and of International Law (foreign relations). While the sciences just named discover the laws of development of the state from the study of all periods and peoples, statistics is a representation of existing states under the guidance of these laws. General *Staatsrecht*, Positive *Staatsrecht*.

3. *Value of Political Economy*.—Indispensability of Political Economy to any well-founded opinions upon the state, especially in our times. Warning, on the other hand, against one-sided overvaluation of material interests. The political and the economic side of the science to be equally emphasized.

#### § 4. SURVEY OF THE FOLLOWING COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

Comparison of the "General Part" with Mathematics, though it rests simply on psychological experiences. How far, then, it is appropriate to express politico-economic relations in algebraic formulæ. Explanation of the terms National Economy, *Volkswirtschaftslehre*, Finance. Whether we can omit Economic Policy and Financial Science from Political Economy. Recommendation and characterization of the systems of Ad. Smith, J. B. Say, Ricardo, and Rau, and *Patriotische Phantasien* of J. Möser, which are to be used side by side with the lectures.

*Translated by W. J. ASHLEY.*